

January 30, 2013

Sudbury Cyclists Union
Sudbury, Ontario



Dear Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates

Re: Georgian Bay Cycling Route

The Sudbury Cyclists Union (SCU) is a grassroots organization whose main focus is to provide a strong unified voice for cyclists and to facilitate a better cycling culture in the City of Greater Sudbury. Our aim is to make cycling safe, accessible, and fun for cyclists of all ages and ability.

We fully support the concept and implementation of a Georgian Bay Cycling Route. The timing is right for such an initiative in Northern Ontario as a number of studies, reports and initiatives in the last few years now propose investing in safe cycling infrastructure as a way of enhancing the socio-economic environment of North Ontario.

- The *Draft Ontario Cycling Strategy* recently released by the Ministry of Transportation (November 2012) proposes *an Ontario-wide vision for a safe cycling network that connects the province, for collision rates and injuries to continue to drop, and for everyone from the occasional user to the daily commuter to feel safe when they get on a bicycle in Ontario.*
- The *Ontario Chief Coroner's Cycling Death Review* (June 2012) identifies a number of safety initiatives that would help make cycling safer in Ontario, including infrastructure enhancements to streets and roads.
- The Ontario Medical Association in their *Enhancing Cycling Safety in Ontario* report (2011) supports cycling as a viable option in reducing obesity and chronic disease.
- Greater Sudbury's *Vital Signs 2012* report (Health and Wellness section) indicates that Sudbury needs to invest in healthy activities to decrease our significantly higher blood pressure, arthritis and obesity rates as compared to provincial and national averages. The report states that the average life expectancy of our residents could increase by 8.3 years *if we made healthier decisions about 5 risk factors (smoking, exercise, diet, alcohol, and stress).*
- Sudbury is planning to implement cycling networks and active transportation corridors, including an Elgin Street Greenway multi-purpose path through downtown Sudbury, and expansion of the Trans-Canada Trail to link Sudbury to North Bay.
- In June, 2012, the SCU participated in a feedback session organized by Tourism Sault Ste. Marie in regards to a proposed Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route; the SCU fully supports this initiative, which now fits into the larger scope of the Georgian Bay Cycling Route.

It has been evident for a number of years that Ontario has been behind in developing cycling networks that would both enhance the health of our citizens, as well as provide significant economic opportunities like those enjoyed by provinces like Quebec and British Columbia.

The proposed cycling route as it now stands takes in parts of Manitoulin District, the District of Sudbury, the District of Parry Sound, the District of Muskoka, the County of Simcoe, Grey County and Bruce County, and supports the strategic visions of the three affected Regional Tourism Organizations. The

proposed route takes into account existing off and on-road cycling infrastructure, low traffic roads, non-motorized multi-purpose trails, and proposes building missing links to make the network complete.

We believe that that local route usage, linkages to other Northern Ontario communities, and access to lucrative markets in Toronto and the United States through the Bike Train to Orillia and Bus Park to Owen Sound, would bring additional tourism dollars to Sudbury, and would help to make our community healthier.

We would ask that the government invest in this cycling network, and that it supports it by building the necessary infrastructure to complete the project. As cyclists, we are especially concerned with the fact that the four-laning of Highway 69 currently cuts cyclists off from easy access to previously-accessible locations like Killarney and other areas north of the French River. The government needs to re-establish access to areas directly south of Sudbury that are heavily dependent on tourism dollars and that would greatly benefit from the proposed Georgian network.

Sincerely,

Sudbury Cyclist Union